

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 05484 01 OF 02 211547Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 EB-07
COME-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /081 W
-----018451 211638Z /45

O R 211410Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8240
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
USMISSION NATO
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 5484

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, TU, CY
SUBJ: ECEVIT STATEMENT ON VAROSHA

REF: NICOSIA 1883 (DTG 201625Z JUL 77) NOTAL

1. FOLLOWING IS TRANSLATION OF ECEVIT'S REMARKS ON
VAROSHA AFTER CABINET MEETING JULY 20 (REFTEL) AS REPORTED
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 05484 01 OF 02 211547Z

IN THE PRESS. ECEVIT MADE A SIMILAR STATEMENT IN AN
EVENING TV INTERVIEW SAME DAY. (MFA WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE
US OFFICIAL TEXTS BECAUSE PRIME MINISTRY DI NOT PASS TEXTS
TO MFA;AT PRIME MINISTRY, WE FOUND NOBODY ABLE TO ANSWER
BECAUSE THIS IS TRANSITION DAY BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS.)

2. BEGIN TEXT

"I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A STATEMENT. AS IS KNOWN THE MARAS (VAROSHA) AREA OF FAMAGUSTA HAS LONG BEEN EMPTY. THIS IS A REGION OF HOTELS. IT IS A VERY IMPORTANT TOURIST CENTRE. THE INSTALLATIONS IN THE REGION HAVE TO BE MADE SERVICEABLE AND REOPENED. WHEN THE RPP GOVERNMENT WAS IN OFFICE IN 1974 WE MADE ALL THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS TO OPEN THE MARAS AREA OF FAMAGUSTA AND TO MAKE USE OF THESE INSTALLATIONS. WE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING AN INVENTORY OF ALL MOBILE AND STATIC ASSETS OF THE REGION. WHEN WE LEFT POWER THESE ACTIVITIES FOR STOCK-TAKING HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED. BUT IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE LEFT POWER. OVER TWO AND A HALF YEARS HAVE GONE BY AND IN THIS PERIOD THE STOCK-TAKING SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETED LONG AGO. YET THE INSTALLATIONS IN THE MARAS AREA WERE NOT REOPENED. CONSEQUENTLY THE WORLD CAME TO BELIEVE WRONGLY THAT THE TURKS WERE KEEPING MARAS INTACT AS WINDOW-DRESSING TO BE GIVEN AWAY AS A CONCESSION LATER. YET THE GOVERNMENT WHICH ORDERED THE 1974 CYPRUS PEACE OPERATION NEVER HAD SUCH AN INTENTION. OUR GOVERNMENT TOOK STEPS TO WIPE OUT THIS IMPRESSION AND PUT AN END TO THE WAITING. IT DECIDED TO OPEN A HOTELIERS' SCHOOL IN THE MARAS AREA. THE PREPARATIONS HAVE ALMOST BEEN COMPLETED." END TEXT.

3. PERTEV SUBASI, MFA DEP SEC GEN FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, TOLD DCM IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION JULY 21 THAT MFA HAD NOT BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 05484 01 OF 02 211547Z

ASKED TO PROVIDE BACKGROUND, NOR HAD IT BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER WAY BEFORE ECEVIT MADE THE STATEMENT. THE MATTER WAS HANDLED COMPLETELY BY THE CARETAKER PRIME MINISTER, APPARENTLY AS A MATTER OF DOMESTIC POLITICS, HE SAID.

4. EMBASSY'S EVALUATION:

A. THE REMARKS PUT ECEVIT ON RECORD AS NOT HAVING CONTEMPLATED--AT THE TIME OF THE CYPRUS INTERVENTION--THE RETURN OF VAROSHA TO THE GREEK CYPRIOTS. THE MAIN MESSAGE OF THE STATEMENT SEEMS PROPERLY READ AS OPPOSING SUCH RETURN AND AS VOICING SUPPORT FOR OPENING THE HOTELS IN VAROSHA. HOWEVER, UNLIKE THE REPORTED STATEMENT OF DEPPRIMIN GUNES(REFTEL), ECEVIT'S STATEMENT STOPS SHORT OF EXPLICITLY FAVORING TURKISH CYPRIOT SETTLEMENT OF VAROSHA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A CORRECTION OF GUNES MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED.

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 05484 02 OF 02 211554Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ANKARA 5484

B. AS A PUBLIC STATEMENT BY A PRIME MINISTER, THE
REMARKS COULD BE TAKEN AS AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CHANGE
IN TURKEY'S CYPRUS POLICY. HOWEVER, IN HIS INTERIM ROLE
AS HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT, ECEVIT HAD NO MANDATE TO CHANGE
GOT FOREIGN POLICY. WE BELIEVE THAT ECEVIT'S REMARKS
SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS REPRESENTING TURKISH POLICY UNLESS
CONFIRMED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH TOOK OFFICE JULY 21.

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 05484 02 OF 02 211554Z

C. BY MAKING THIS STATEMENT ON HIS LAST FULL DAY IN
OFFICE, ECEVIT SEEMS PRINCIPALLY TO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO SABOTAGE
HIS SUCCESSOR'S MEANS OF DEALING SUCCESSFULLY WITH CYPRUS.
HAVING TAKEN THE POSITION ONE DAY BEFORE THAT NO TIME SHOULD BE
LOST IN SEEKING A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT, ECEVIT CONVERSELY ADDED

TO THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DIFFICULTY OF THE SETTLEMENT
PROCESS.

D. ECEVIT'S REMARKS MAY BE A MEANS OF SERVING NOTICE
OF THE KIND OF OPPOSITION THAT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM HIM NOW
THAT DEMIREL HAS RETURNED TO POWER.

3. SUBJECT TO THE COMMENTS OF EMBASSY NICOSIA, WE SEE
SOME POSSIBILITY THAT (1) ECEVIT IS SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN
HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKISH CYPRIOT LEADER DENKTASH, AND
(2) AS A RESULT, DENKTASH'S BARGAINING POSITION VIS-A-VIS
DMEIREL REGARDING POTENTIAL CONCESSIONS IN CYPRUS
MAY BE STRENGTHENED.

5. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR AND DCM,
PROMINENT POLITICAL JOURNALIST WITH CLOSE CONNECTIONS TO
ECEVIT ARGUED THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT WAS NOT SURPRISING,
THAT TIMING WAS PRODUCT OF REQUIREMENT OF NORMAL DECISION-
MAKING PROCESSES RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO EMBARRASS NEW
GOVERNMENT. JOURNALIST ARGUED THAT AREA HAD BEEN
DETERIORATING, WAS SUBJECT TO EXTENSIVE PILLAGING AND
LOOTING. AS SHE DESCRIBED IT, PLAN WAS TO PERMIT ORIGINAL
HOTEL OWNERS WHO WERE FOREIGNERS TO OPERATE NORMALLY, WITH
NORMAL REPATRIATION OF PROFITS. IN CASES IN WHICH HOTELS
OR FACILITIES WERE GREEK-OWNED, PROCEEDS WOULD BE HELD IN
ESCROW. THIS DID NOT INDICATE IN ANY WAY A CHANGE IN
TURKISH ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGOTIABILITY OF TERRITORY, BUT
WOULD MAKE THIS A BIGGER AND MORE DRAMATIC PACKAGE IF AREAS
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PAGE 03 ANKARA 05484 02 OF 02 211554Z

WERE TO BE RETURNED TO GREEK CYPRIOTS, AND THEREFORE A
MORE VALUABLE BARGAINING COUNTER. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT
WHATEVER ECEVIT'S MOTIVATIONS OR PERSPECTIVE HAD BEEN,
SITUATION MIGHT BE DIFFERENT FOR HIS SUCCESSORS WHO MIGHT
BE MORE TEMPTED TO REGARD THIS MOVE AS CONSTITUTING A
FAIT ACCOMPLI AND DIMINISH TURKISH WILLINGNESS TO BARGAIN
IT AWAY. JOURNALIST NOTED THAT DURING EARLY TALKS TURKISH
SIDE HAD PROPOSED, AND GREEK SIDE REJECTED, MAKING FAMAGUSTA
(OF WHICH VAROSHA IS SUBURB) A FREE PORT AREA SO THAT IS
COULD BE GOTTEN BACK INTO BUSINESS.

6. COMMENT: NO DOUBT ECEVIT'S REMARKS WILL BE THE
SUBJECT OF COMMENT BY THE OTHER PARTIES TO THE CYPRUS
DISPUTE. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT HE HIMSELF WILL HAVE MORE
TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT, AND THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT MAY
ALSO DECLARE ITSELF. DEPENDING ON THE OUTCOME OF THESE
EXCHANGES, WE MAY WELL NEED TO CONSIDER INCLUDING THE
QUESTION OF VAROSHA IN OUR INITIAL APPROACH TO THE NEW
GOVERNMENT.
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